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ABSTRACT

Issues in education are identified, and recommendations are made on each. Following each recommendation, a brief opinion statement is offered on the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendation. The following issues are addressed: (1) What is the role of the state in defining curriculum for students? (2) How can we help to improve the scholastic performance of all students? (3) How can we promote a safer, more productive learning environment? (4) What is the best way for parents to be involved in the schools? (5) How can community resources, including business and industry, be more fully utilized in schools? (6) How can we best attract and train highly-qualified candidates for teaching? (7) How can currently employed teachers and administrators stay informed about developments in their field? (8) How can we encourage teachers' highest achievements and their continued commitment to teaching? (9) How should we integrate computers into schools? (10) How should the state be involved in acquiring computer equipment and training teachers to use it? (11) How can the state system of public schools explore and utilize new ideas to improve learning? and (12) How can the state ensure that educational funds are fairly distributed? (JD)

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Issues In Education

An Examination

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School of Education
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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Issues In Education: An Examination

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Introduction

When America evolved from an agricultural to an industrial society, American education evolved with it through the great educational reform movements of the 19th century. Today our country is moving into a new, post-industrial era of technology and communications, and again, American education must meet the challenge and the demands of change.

This challenge belongs to everyone. It belongs to taxpayers—in the city of Boston, for instance, taxpayers provide $4,076 for each student in the public school system, a total of $229,700,000 per year. It belongs to business and industry, which look to the schools to provide students both with traditional basic skills—English, mathematics, science and social studies—and with the new "basic skills"—computer literacy, and media, telecommunications and multicultural skills for an increasingly interdependent global business community. It belongs to legislators—in Massachusetts, $1,166,561,294 has been appropriated this year for elementary and secondary school education. How can these resources best meet the needs of our cities and towns? It belongs to teachers and school administrators, who must formulate and translate educational goals into educational realities. And most importantly, it belongs to parents and students, whose individual lives are directly and profoundly affected by the changes—or lack of change—in educational policy.

Our legislature, through its Joint Committee on Education, is in the process of studying elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth. They expect to introduce important legislation aimed at improving the public school system by 1984. The following pages identify some of the issues they are considering, and offer a sample of options for resolving each issue. It is a kind of multiple choice examination for the real world. The answers cannot be found at the back of the book—they can only be found within ourselves, and even then, only when we realize how important it is to look for them.

Note: This booklet cannot contain every issue in education, nor can it discuss all the complex advantages and disadvantages of each option; rather, it is intended as a beginning for discussion. We gleaned sample options from recent national reports, from hearings conducted by the Joint Committee on Education, and from listening to the perspectives of different, interested groups. It is important that all citizens have an opportunity to review the issues and participate in the process of improving our public schools. In this spirit, we are making this report available.

1) What is the role of the state in defining curriculum for students?

The state should mandate a core curriculum—that is, a course of study in specific subjects, such as so many years of English, so many years of math, etc., with accompanying lesson plans for teachers to follow.

ADVANTAGES

A state mandated curriculum insures that students' education is not limited by any particular parochial bias. For instance, a community may not see the importance of foreign language instruction, a situation which could handicap some of its students in future goals.

DISADVANTAGES

An inflexible core curriculum imposed by the state could seriously hinder individual initiative and imagination on the part of teachers. Research has shown that all students do not learn at the same rate, and cannot be expected to follow the same curriculum.

The state should provide information and technical resources, as is currently the case, and communities continue to control the development of their curriculum and requirements.

ADVANTAGES

Communities can incorporate the state's resources and expertise into program development that meets local needs.

DISADVANTAGES

Some communities may continue to provide educational programs geared to particular segments of their population, but not to all students.

The state should decide what courses are taught; local communities then decide how they are taught, with periodic review by the state.

ADVANTAGES

This option both provides consistency in educational planning from community to community and encourages local initiatives, which can be shared among communities. Students moving between cities or towns would not duplicate or miss coursework.

DISADVANTAGES

Not all communities will have the facilities to implement courses designed by state planners.

2) How can we help to improve the scholastic performance...

Introduce a recommended uniform program of study for all students, as well as standardized tests for graduation or promotion.

ADVANTAGES

Both students and teachers will know where they stand in relation to what is expected of them in terms of specific academic achievements. After all, colleges and universities find standardized tests like SATs useful in assessing college applicants. Further, as social and economic trends develop, and certain academic or job skills are perceived as desirable, new programs could be introduced into curriculum development on a statewide level.

DISADVANTAGES

The concept of standardized curriculum and testing opposes a longstanding American tradition, especially in Massachusetts school systems, that local school boards and school administrators decide how their children should be educated. A standardized system does not take into account individual differences in students, and is at best a measure of the lowest common denominator of scholastic achievement. Also, there is a strong likelihood that high school students who fail standardized tests will more often drop out of school than not be promoted, creating more unemployment problems for the state.

Increase funding for special programs, such as tutoring, remedial classes and other forms of "compensatory education."

ADVANTAGES

Programs like Title I have proven helpful in enabling students from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve more gains in basic academic skills.

DISADVANTAGES

Programs like Title I are also very expensive, and it is questionable whether they should be used as a kind of blanket solution for all students whose achievements do not "measure up." Some students do benefit greatly from special programs, but many others feel the social stigma of being labeled "different," and the experience is more isolating than integrating.

Establish standards for academic achievement, but work with teachers and principals to help students achieve their goals on an individual basis.

ADVANTAGES

Individual programs of achievement take each student's interests and needs into account, and help to create a bond between student and teacher, a mutual recognition that humanizes and strengthens the learning environment. Teachers and parents who know each student are more likely to know what that student needs, including tutoring, bi-lingual or gifted programs. And just as there are differences between students, there are differences between classes; teachers need the option of adjusting their teaching methods from class to class and from year to year. They also need to know that their methods and decisions receive administrative acknowledgement and support.

DISADVANTAGES

Establishing a program in which students' achievements are assessed individually involves special training and a relatively low student-teacher ratio, which makes it ex-

...of all students?

pensive to implement and beyond the means of some school systems. A serious inequity could therefore be perpetuated between affluent and less affluent cities and towns in terms of the quality of education in their schools.

Increase the time students spend in school, either by extending the school day, or the number of days in the school year.

ADVANTAGES

Teachers will be able to spend more time with students; ideally this would include more time spent with individual students. Also, more individual and group study time could be incorporated into the school day. This time would benefit students who have difficulty structuring their own study time, particularly those whose home life is not conducive to study.

DISADVANTAGES

A longer school day or school year that is essentially "more of the same" would not substantially improve student performance. Moreover, the increased funding needed for heat, building maintenance and staff could cripple school budgets, and make other needed educational reforms difficult or even impossible.

Establish a systemwide assessment of student achievement and progress to identify curriculum areas in which particular schools or systems need additional attention.

ADVANTAGES

This is a simple, straightforward way to gather data about our schools. Systematic assessment allows comparisons between schools within systems and between systems in the state, as well as with the nation as a whole through the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

DISADVANTAGES

An isolated test, not tied to school curriculum, only provides abstract numbers, and does not measure the real success of a school—whether individual students have significantly progressed. There is the danger that reliance upon these tests for assessment purposes will sacrifice attention to individual goals and degrees of progress. Further, data about different school systems might be used to stigmatize particular regions or socioeconomic groups, if it is not properly analyzed and put in perspective.

Ensure that all schools have nutritional and health programs.

ADVANTAGES

Research indicates that nutrition is an enormously important factor in the cognitive development of children. A good lunch program, and possibly a breakfast program, can make an immediate difference in children's performance in school. The long-term consequences of ignoring health care needs will only result in more expenses for the state later.

DISADVANTAGES

Because the federal government has cut back funding for nutrition programs, the state might find them too costly to assume without cutting into funding for academic programs.

3) How can we promote a safer, more productive learning environment?

Establish precise, enforceable behavior codes with strong adult supervision.

ADVANTAGES

Students will be able to regulate their behavior if they have a clear sense of what is expected of them.

DISADVANTAGES

This practice might cause teachers to see themselves more as wardens than teachers, especially those who have large classes. If a strict code of behavior is to be implemented, it is asking a great deal of teachers to enforce this code without assistance, and still teach.

Involve teachers and students in cooperatively setting up their own rules of conduct.

ADVANTAGES

This policy would give students a practical exercise in self-governing, helping them to understand the value of rules or laws in a democratic society. By enforcing these rules themselves, teachers and students will become partners in the creation of an environment, rather than victims of it.

DISADVANTAGES

Some students are not ready or willing to take on this responsibility. Teachers and administrators would be hard pressed to establish programs with students who may or may not be able to carry them out. Also, in many instances, younger people are harder on themselves and each other than an adult would be.

Establish communication between home and school to clarify expectations of student behavior and provide consistent follow-through.

ADVANTAGES

Students will not be getting mixed messages from their two main sources of adult guidance: home and school. Teachers and parents can be mutually supportive in their efforts to help students mature.

DISADVANTAGES

This policy could emphasize punitive measures rather than preventive ones.

Attempt to prevent discipline problems by creating alternative educational settings for students who need them.

ADVANTAGES

Many potential problems may be prevented with attention to individual needs. While many students will thrive in a large system, others need a smaller, supportive environment, and provided with one, will succeed.

DISADVANTAGES

These programs require a small teacher-student ratio, and may be beyond the means of many school systems.

4) What is the best way for parents to be involved in the schools?

Establish state-mandated parent advisory councils to provide parents with input into school curricula and other educational policy.

ADVANTAGES

Such councils would establish formal, systematic linkage with the community through the parents. They would ensure that parents have a voice in school policies.

DISADVANTAGES

A mandated council would impose yet further requirements by the state upon local school districts, and possibly weaken long-established parent groups such as P.T.A.s and P.T.O.s.

Each school or school district will encourage parent participation in a form of its own choosing, whether it be a P.T.A., P.T.O., or parent advisory council.

ADVANTAGES

Local school districts retain their autonomy and are able to choose a form of parent participation that best suits the community's needs. Similarly, parents who become involved in these groups do so because they want to, not because state funding is tied up in mandatory establishment of parent councils.

DISADVANTAGES

Some areas will not have representation, either because of lack of interest on the part of parents, or lack of support on the part of school administrators.

Parents should have the right to choose among options for their child's education, through the establishment of "magnet" or "theme" schools.

ADVANTAGES

Students will be able to pursue a course of study—or method of teaching—tailored to their particular interests or needs, and parents will have the opportunity to guide their children into appropriate school settings. Such magnet schools could include emphases on math and science; arts; classical studies; traditional academic programs with stricter discipline and dress; international studies; even schools within schools, with small classes. In Raleigh, North Carolina, the parents of half the district's 55,000 students chose to send their children to magnet schools.

DISADVANTAGES

It will take a great deal of effort and interest on the part of parents to learn about these new educational programs—and some students have no parents, or have parents who are not interested in school curricula. Also, school systems would have to design and produce these educational options—a process both time consuming and expensive.

5) How can community resources, including business and industry, be more fully utilized in schools?

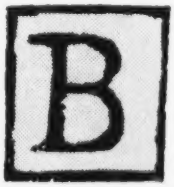
Increase school volunteer programs throughout the state.

ADVANTAGES

College students, retired people and parents have much to offer students as teacher aides and tutors, and they provide cross-generational contact.

DISADVANTAGES

Volunteer programs are difficult to administer; volunteers are often well-meaning but unreliable or not equipped to work with adolescents. Untrained volunteers could present an administrative problem; they need to regard themselves as part of a professional team.



Establish a semi-public corporation with private and state funding to set up a program of community participation in schools—art galleries, museums, higher education, social service agencies taking part in school programs.

ADVANTAGES

A semi-public corporation would bring together public and private institutions to oversee projects which are themselves joint efforts. The Boston Public Schools now have a cooperative arrangement with 160 social service agencies and local judges to combat truancy with family and individual counseling programs.

DISADVANTAGES

The state Department of Education already works on school/community activities, so a new overseeing body might be a duplication of effort.

Schools can create partnerships with businesses, both to provide students with business experience and to receive input from the business community on what academic skills are needed.

ADVANTAGES

This option would expose students in a direct way to career opportunities, and increase the resources and talents available to schools without increasing their budgets.

DISADVANTAGES

Implementing these programs would involve much red tape, and possibly objections from fulltime employees or unions. Although businesses would provide technical expertise, they would need training and assistance in teaching and working with young people. Schools are not simply training grounds for industry.

Encourage school-based foundations, that is, non-profit organizations that raise money and disperse it for school activities, through providing state technical assistance in this area.

ADVANTAGES

Foundation programs could increase community involvement in schools, and increase revenues for programs without increasing taxes.

DISADVANTAGES

Foundations only work if they have very strong local support. If the local community sees results they do not like as a result of foundation support for the schools, where is their access to decision makers, how can they expect accountability from people outside the public system?

6) How can we best attract and train highly-qualified candidates for teaching?

Raise salaries.

ADVANTAGES

If salaries become more competitive, more individuals will consider becoming teachers.

DISADVANTAGES

Spending a large amount of limited educational funding on teacher salaries may cut into appropriations for needed curriculum development, supplies, and special programs.

Increase standards for admissions to teacher training programs.

ADVANTAGES

Nationwide, education majors have recently been scoring well below the national average on SAT exams. If admissions standards are raised, those who are admitted will be better qualified.

DISADVANTAGES

Just as standardized testing does not necessarily identify the best students, it also does not necessarily identify the best teachers. The desire and ability to work with young people cannot be quantified. Further, if we raise standards, we may reduce the supply of teachers in the near future and risk a shortage.

Expand teacher training programs to require an additional year beyond a bachelor's degree for certification.

ADVANTAGES

Teachers will have a better general education, as well as more training in the practice of teaching.

DISADVANTAGES

It will take longer to prepare teachers. Many potential teachers could not afford an additional year of training.

Increase practical experience, such as internships in the schools, as part of teacher training programs.

ADVANTAGES

Teaching candidates will have much more involvement with students. By working more closely with teachers, they will get to know what is taught in the schools and how it is taught. This option would help implement the state's new certification law which requires two years of provisional certification.

DISADVANTAGES

Asking existing teachers to take on added responsibilities may leave them with less time for their students.

7) How can currently employed teachers and administrators...

Provide inservice training opportunities for individual teachers, including coursework, workshops, sabbaticals, attendance at conferences.

ADVANTAGES

Teachers can learn to use new classroom materials and choose the areas in which they want professional development. These opportunities expand teachers' options, and provide them with stimulation and new ideas in areas that attract them.

DISADVANTAGES

Teachers may pursue a course of study which interests them, but is not necessarily useful to the school system as whole, or practicable in it.

Expand the services of the Commonwealth Inservice Institute of the state Department of Education, which provides training grants to groups of teachers for specific proposals.

ADVANTAGES

Teachers as a group have to identify the needs of their particular school, and the state is able to review and underwrite their proposals with an eye toward statewide curriculum goals.

DISADVANTAGES

The agency could only fund what is requested, and would not be able to enact a statewide development plan.

Require recertification through periodic coursework or tests.

ADVANTAGES

The Commonwealth would be able to insure that teachers be exposed to new developments in their fields, as well as program innovations.

DISADVANTAGES

By requiring recertification through specific coursework or tests, the state may be infringing on the autonomy of local school systems. Although it may be appropriate for teachers to undergo a review and examination process to teach subjects they have not previously taught, it is unreasonable to test them in areas they currently teach, and in which they have already completed professional training.

...stay informed about developments in their field?

Use a dual system of self-evaluation and evaluation by peers and supervisors as a tool to determine training needs.

ADVANTAGES

Such a system improves communication between teachers and administrators because it enables them to work together to define professional objectives. It also provides teachers with the opportunity to demonstrate what they have accomplished on their own to keep pace.

DISADVANTAGES

A good evaluation model is difficult to find, and few administrators have training in evaluation.

Develop partnerships between public schools and universities for school improvement and training.

ADVANTAGES

This option would be mutually beneficial to universities, where education is researched, and schools, where education is practiced.

DISADVANTAGES

There is the danger that universities involved in this kind of partnership would see the schools primarily as laboratories for their research, and possibly overlook the needs of the schools and teachers.

8) How can we encourage teachers' highest achievements, and their continued commitment to teaching?

Grant a statewide pay increase to all teachers.

ADVANTAGES

Such an increase would immediately raise the morale of current teachers, and might attract new teachers to the profession.

DISADVANTAGES

There are already large discrepancies among teacher salaries from community to community, so an across-the-board increase would only perpetuate these inequities.

Institute a policy of "merit pay," salary based on measures of teacher or student performance.

ADVANTAGES

Those entering the profession will see that in teaching, as in other professions, the better one's performance, the higher one's salary. It might help current teachers remain—teachers who are considering leaving the field for financial reasons—or it could enable them to give up second jobs, which many need to support their families.

DISADVANTAGES

Who can really judge the performance of teachers in different classroom contexts, in different schools, even in different cities and towns? A system based on student achievement according to a national norm is fair neither to student nor teacher. Various forms of "merit pay" or "Master Teacher" plans have been tried since the 1930s, but have seldom succeeded, and have often lowered morale.

Grant teachers protection from arbitrary and capricious dismissal, but not tenure for life.

ADVANTAGES

The current process for firing a tenured teacher is long and involved and unfair to teachers and administrators. A clearer evaluation system and a more straightforward appeal process would be more acceptable to both professionals and the general public.

DISADVANTAGES

Teachers may feel they are losing a long held protection of their professional integrity and academic freedom.

Teachers should be hired to work at different types of jobs.

ADVANTAGES

This option recognizes the opportunities for continued professional development—teachers would be contractually employed and paid for different lengths of time (including work beyond the 180 school days), and possibly have decreased teaching loads for time spent developing curriculum, planning, or supervising beginning teachers. Such an arrangement could lead to a more clearly defined career ladder for teachers.

DISADVANTAGES

A potential problem would be choosing who has what job—this idea must be developed with the goal of providing all teachers in the system with the opportunity to increase their expertise.

9) How should we integrate computers into schools?

Carefully evaluate educational goals and software, slowing down the process of bringing computers into the classroom.

ADVANTAGES

A slow integration gives schools time to become accustomed to the change, time to finance purchase of equipment, and time for careful teacher preparation.

DISADVANTAGES

If Massachusetts school systems delay introduction of computers, they may fall behind private schools and public schools in other states, and disadvantage their students in a competitive job market.

Implement a policy of immediate, total immersion into computer-assisted instruction and computer programming skills for students.

ADVANTAGES

All students will have the opportunity to use and understand computers. Basic academic skills achievement will improve. (Studies of computer-assisted instruction indicate an increase in achievement over traditional methods of teaching.)

DISADVANTAGES

Schools will have the machines, but staff members might not know how to use them. We run the risk of repeating our error regarding television in the schools: in the 1960s, many televisions were bought at great expense, but were never fully utilized as educational tools.

Aim for some computer instruction in <u>all</u> schools, making use of what we have already learned from some successful programs in the state.

ADVANTAGES

By identifying and supporting schools where there has already been headway made in the introduction of computers, other schools can learn from their successes. Towns like Lexington and Shrewsbury, where extensive computer programs are already established, could serve as models.

DISADVANTAGES

In the short run, students will not have equal access to equipment and programs.

10) How should the state be involved in acquiring computer equipment and training teachers to use it?

The state should set up regional training centers, making the use of educational technology a priority.

ADVANTAGES

A statewide commitment would assure that school systems would have assistance in planning and training. Regional centers could provide consultant banks, software previewing labs and evaluations, public domain programs, sample microcomputers, troubleshooting hotlines, group purchase rates, telecommunications applications, and membership in the successful Minnesota Educational Computer Consortium. For best results, the centers should be integrated into some academic program.

DISADVANTAGES

If the state alone assumes responsibility for training, it could become costly. Because the state-of-the-art changes so quickly in this area, there may be problems in maintaining current information.

The state should encourage the private sector to set up training programs and informational workshops on the use of their products.

ADVANTAGES

Business and industry employ knowledgeable people who would be able to share technical skills otherwise unavailable to schools because of budget restraints.

DISADVANTAGES

Some people may feel that the private sector could impinge on the academic freedom of schools. In addition, some businesses may be willing to assist in training for short periods, but not over the long run. Schools need to know that they will have the training resources they need.

Tax credits should be granted to any person or company wanting to donate computers to schools.

ADVANTAGES

Individuals as well as businesses would be encouraged to donate equipment to schools. Schools would be able to install hardware much more quickly than if they had to depend upon only their own budgets.

DISADVANTAGES

From an educational perspective, communities may receive inappropriate equipment. Most experts agree that software decisions should come before hardware acquisitions. This system includes no controls on which companies give equipment to which schools. From an economic perspective, tax credits only make sense if they cause actions that otherwise would not happen. Massachusetts schools have been steadily adding computers to their programs over the past few years.

11) How can the state system of public schools explore and utilize new ideas to improve learning?

The state will not initiate such research and development (R&D) programs, but will provide funding and basic guidelines for areas of high priority (such as use of educational technology or collaborative job training programs). Cities and towns could then qualify for these funds by submitting proposals.

ADVANTAGES

Communities can decide for themselves what programs need exploration.

DISADVANTAGES

A series of small grants would tend to dissipate, and possibly duplicate, R&D efforts. Schools have not traditionally engaged in these activities, and have no proven record of success in R&D.

The state will require that each locality spend a certain percentage of overall budget to advance new educational programs.

ADVANTAGES

This requirement would build into every school system a capacity to try out new ideas.

DISADVANTAGES

Local education budgets are already strained, and administrators are likely to regard R&D as a low priority. How much money is needed, and how much can be afforded, will vary from town to town, so setting a specific percentage of the school budget is arbitrary and impracticable.

The state will establish a semi-public foundation to coordinate R&D efforts, whether in innovative schools or programs with such emphases as medicine, performing arts, multilingual programs, or math/science/technology.

ADVANTAGES

State supported R&D schools or systems could be systematically used to provide teacher training and to disseminate findings to school systems. These programs would build public interest in improving education, and would encourage the private sector to provide resources and grants, and become involved in educational reform.

DISADVANTAGES

Unless closely monitored, a network of special schools and programs could easily focus on already advantaged students, and become a showplace rather than an educational tool.

12) How can the state ensure that educational funds...

Increase state share to local education agencies from an average of 37% to 50%.

ADVANTAGES

Property taxes will be relieved, and as the state increases its share of the cost of public education, it will have more influence in implementing school improvement programs. Although we now have an equalizing formula for the disbursement of state funds, its impact is seriously eroded at levels of funding below 50% of total state cost.

DISADVANTAGES

If the state has more control over schools, communities might lose their initiative and diversity in educational planning. Local initiative has traditionally been an important factor in public education.

Establish a minimum cost per pupil on a statewide basis, with supplemental funding by the state, if necessary.

ADVANTAGES

Currently there is no minimum cost per pupil, and some communities spend up to four times as much as others on each student's education. If the state establishes a minimum cost per pupil, poorer communities would not be penalized for their inability to provide a minimum level of educational resources.

DISADVANTAGES

Some communities might regard a minimum amount as a maximum to be spent. Factions in the community who do not see public education as a high priority would distort the concept of a minimum cost per pupil, using the set dollar figure as a justification for opposing additional support. Many states now have a minimum expenditure, but no state has a minimum as high as its average expenditure.

Create a voucher system giving parents an equal amount of money to be assigned to the school of their choice.

ADVANTAGES

Parents would have a more central role in their children's education, when enabled by a voucher system to choose among public and private schools. Public schools would, for the first time, be in direct competition for the same educational dollars as private schools, and might have to improve or close.

DISADVANTAGES

The great variation in costs between elementary and secondary schools, between vocational education and college preparatory courses, make a uniform voucher system impossible. Further, public education benefits everyone, not just families with children in public schools. One of the purposes of public education in a democracy has always been to

...are fairly distributed?

prepare children for their responsibilities as citizens. As a public resource, schools should be publicly supported. Also, funding for a voucher system would come from taxpayers without children as well as taxpayers with children. They would have no say over how *their* money was being spent.

Change the disbursement of state Chapter 70 funds for local aid to education from a deposit in cities' and towns' general funds directly into school committee funds.

ADVANTAGES

Money targeted for education would definitely be used for education. This option would ensure that new educational funding from the state go directly to the schools to supplement present funding.

DISADVANTAGES

Although cities and towns are not entitled to use Chapter 70 monies for purposes other than education, in fact, some do. These communities might have to reduce essential services because of the 2½% tax limit on equalized property valuation.

Establish metropolitan financing of school districts whereby all the schools within a large metropolitan area (greater Boston, greater Lowell, greater Springfield, etc.) would pool financial resources.

ADVANTAGES

This option would immediately equalize funding available for students from both rich and poor communities. It would bring about cooperation between systems, and discourage duplication of services. As individual towns had equal funding available for salaries, bargaining for good teachers would depend more on working conditions.

DISADVANTAGES

Larger systems are more difficult to manage, especially systems containing the diverse elements a metropolitan system would bring together. Wealthier towns might feel their resources unfairly drained to support the less affluent communities in the district, a burden they might feel should be equally shared on a statewide basis.

HOW CAN THE STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPLORE AND UTILIZE NEW IDEAS TO IMPROVE LEARNING?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR PARENTS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOLS?

HOW CAN WE HELP TO IMPROVE THE SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS?

HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE TEACHERS' HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENTS, AND THEIR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO TEACHING?

HOW SHOULD WE INTRODUCE COMPUTERS INTO SCHOOLS?

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION?

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN DEFINING CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS?

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE A SAFER, MORE PRODUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

HOW SHOULD THE STATE BE INVOLVED IN ACQUIRING COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING TEACHERS TO USE IT?

HOW CAN WE BEST ATTRACT AND TRAIN HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR TEACHING?

HOW SHALL WE ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING?

HOW SHALL TECHNOLOGY BE USED IN THE SCHOOLS?

HOW CAN THE STATE BEST SERVE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF RURAL AREAS?

HOW CAN WORKING TEACHERS STAY INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR FIELD?

HOW CAN THE STATE BEST SERVE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF URBAN AREAS?

HOW CAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES, INCLUDING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, BE MORE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZED IN SCHOOLS?